



House Budget Committee

Democratic Caucus

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Bush's Education Increase: Smaller than It Appears

Dear Democratic Colleague:

President Bush announced this week that his 2002 budget will give the Department of Education (ED) \$44.5 billion in appropriations, which he called an 11.5 percent increase over the 2001 level of \$39.9 billion. However, it is not an 11.5 percent increase by any normal yardstick. By understating the 2001 funding level, the Administration is trying to make the size of its increase look larger than it is.

The true level of funding for the 2001 program year includes an additional \$2.1 billion that Congress provided for 2002 in last year's appropriations bill. If Congress froze funding for ED at the 2001 level, ED would receive \$42.1 billion. Thus, President Bush is proposing an increase of only \$2.4 billion.

! **4.2 percent increase (\$1.8 billion) over inflation**

— The proposed increase is only \$1.8 billion above the \$42.7 billion needed to maintain purchasing power for ED programs. This increase is 4.2 percent above the real (inflation-adjusted) 2001 appropriations level, just over one-third of the 11.5 percent increase that the White House claims.

Department of Education Funding

2001 freeze level*	\$42.1 billion
2001 inflation adjusted	\$42.7 billion
2002 Bush proposal	\$44.5 billion

* The 2001 freeze level includes the additional \$2.1 billion that the 2001 appropriations bill provided in advance appropriations for ED.

! **5.7 percent increase (\$2.4 billion) over a freeze**

— Alternatively, one could measure the increase over a freeze at the 2001 level of \$42.1 billion. Using this yardstick, the President's proposed increase of \$2.4 billion is just 5.7 percent above a freeze.

! **Far less than the 18.2 percent increase last year** — In contrast to this modest proposal, Congress last year increased ED appropriations by 18.2 percent over the 2000 freeze level. In fact, Congress has increased ED appropriations by an average of 13 percent annually over the last five years. President Bush's proposal falls far short; by any measure, it provides less than half of the increase Congress has been giving to education in recent years.

Sincerely,

John M. Spratt, Jr.
Ranking Democratic Member